

SPIRITUAL

TELEGRAPH

DEVOTED TO THE ILLUSTRATION OF SPIRITUAL INTERCOURSE.

"THE AGITATION OF THOUGHT IS THE BEGINNING OF WISDOM."

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WHOLE NO., 88.

The Principles of Nature.

GOD.
NO. II.

The devotional faculty as much proves the existence of a God as any other faculty of the human soul proves its legitimate object. The existence of the optic sense proves light, color, etc.; the existence of the auditory sense proves sound; the olfactory, odors, etc. So the existence of the sensitive powers presupposes sex; the existence of the philoprogenitive instinct presupposes objects, and the existence of the moral faculties unequivocally attest the moral relations into which man comes with his fellow-man. In like manner the existence of a devotional instinct—a faculty of reverence and worship in the human soul—undeniably attests the existence of its proper object—God. The heart and soul of man demands a God as imperatively as the eye demands light, the ear sound, or the foot an earth to walk on. God has ineffaceably recorded the great fact of his existence on his creature's own heart. This record can be read not only in the heart of each man, but in the history of the religious sentiment of all races, and ages, and people. None ever existed that believed not in the existence of a Supreme Being—some all-powerful agent overruling all mundane affairs. From the isles in the South Pacific to Greenland, and from Cape Town to Spitzbergen, are everywhere to be found the belief in, and worship of, a Supreme Being. The myriads of China, and Japan, and India, and Africa's swarthy millions, with one voice testify humanity's instinctive belief in the existence of God. The same instinct of Deity that impelled Egypt's long-buried races to put their toil and genius upon the Temple of Jupiter Ammon, on the banks of the Nile—to exogate its matchless architecture, and adorn its ample aisles and ways, is the very same instinct of Deity which built Trinity church, and decorated its altar, and stained its windows, and erected its lofty spire. The mosque and the cathedral arch, and the village church steeple, all date from the same devotional feeling, nature to the human heart and soul. The development of this worshiping instinct and the results of its activity, more graphically mark the history of the human race than even the social and political phases it has passed through. In all ancient times, so far as we have any record, the fear and worship of a Supreme or Superior Being has been elevated above all other duties, and more temples and altars were dedicated to, and more rites and ceremonies instituted for, his worship than were ever the outgrowth of any other faculty. All time is full of the monuments and testimonies of humanity's instinct of worship. It seems to have been the prevailing and overruling faculty of the soul, and if there is any truth in the localizations of the faculties in the brain, it is, by virtue of its preeminence alone, rightly assigned the topmost place. It is very true that the growth and exercise of this faculty in times of ignorance and undevelopment have been misdirected and perverted. It is very true that the darkened intellect of the savage has conceived him a cruel and savage being; that the warrior has conceived him a God of war; the despot as a God of arbitrary dominion, etc. It is very true that under the various forms and characters in which he has been conceived by undeveloped races, and tribes, and nations, he has been worshiped by human sacrifices, by blood, by infant life, by fasting and feasting, by dread inflictions, countless ceremonies, and solemn orgies. All these, however, can be well accounted for by the rudeness and ignorance of the undeveloped mind, and its corresponding worship. All is the offspring of ignorance and misdirection. But from the sacrificial human blood shed on the altars of Yucatan, away back in the gloom of time, and offered up to the sun as the God Supreme, up to the sacrament of the Eucharist, or the emblematic supper of our modern churches, no question has ever been made as to the abstract fact of the existence of a Supreme Being. While millions of human beings in China were bowing in adoration to the Grand Lama, the North American Indian, on the other side of the globe, offered up his prayer to the Great Spirit. While the ancient Central American was sacrificing to the Sun, as God, the followers of Moses, on the opposite of the globe, were worshipping the God of Israel. Races, cut off from all knowledge of, and communications with, their fellow-beings in other lands and times, still worship, and reverence, and adore. It matters not that some have conceived and worshiped this Deity as the element of fire, and others as water, others as the light, and others as the omnipresent life. It matters not that the Scythian worshiped him as the Great Warrior; the Yucatanese as the Sun; the South Sea Islander as the Thunder; the Kamakian as the Great Seal Catcher, or Whale Killer, etc. The instinct of worship is the same in all. Although these conceptions of who God is are diverse and various, leading to diverse and various modes of worship, yet they all spring from the same source, to wit: the devotional instinct. About this there can be no question. The forms that this instinct has taken among different tribes and nations, and at different times, originated in rudeness and ignorance,

in the peculiarities, habits, customs, and surrounding influences of the conceiving mind. Yet, let the manner of conceiving God be what it may, all without exception ascribe to him human attributes. All spontaneously believe that he can be moved by prayer, appeased by sacrifices, exalted and glorified by praise, and provoked to wrath by misdeeds. All believe that he has intelligence, and wisdom, and power to overrule events, and that he has love, jealousy, hatred, mercy, etc., indicating their conception of him as a human being.

It is no use for me now to advert to the old argument of the display of design in the universe, and all its workings to a benevolent end, to prove that its cause must have been and is an intelligent and good cause. We are all familiar with this argument and know how much it proves, and how much it leaves unproved.

Taking the existence of God as an established fact, let us again inquire who he is?

The answer to this inquiry may be further elicited by another inquiry, namely: What does this instinct of worship require? What does the heart of man demand? I affirm that none other than a human God will satisfy it; none other will meet its wants and answer its devotional impulses and desires. No man can worship a principle. He might as well worship electricity or magnetism. No man can worship the totality of law; none can worship Nature, or the soul of the universe. Pantheism is as much out of the question here as Atheism. An organized, personal, intelligent, and emotional human God is the only God that can be worshiped by the heart of man—the only God that can be loved with a human love, and the only God that can be rationally conceived by the human mind.

We have shown, in a previous paper, that if God is to be known and believed in at all, he must be conceived in the human form and character, inasmuch as he must be something, and to be something he must be in form, and to be in form he must be conceived in the human form, as we can not imagine conceive a higher. This is in keeping with the universal experience and history of mankind. This argument acquires additional force from the fact that the race of man can come into no moral and spiritual relations with any but a human God. How could I love, treat with, worship, offend, appease, honor or adore a principle, or a brain, or the Soul of the world? I might as well make convention with the stars, or confer with the winds or tides? Is it not therefore plain, that if we have to do with God at all—that if he can come into any intellectual, moral, or spiritual relations with him, he must be human. Without this human character we can have nothing to do with him.

It has already been stated, that the study of theology, through the physical sciences exclusively, leads to Materialism, or Atheism. And even if the student of the physical sciences recognizes and affirms a spiritual sphere or spheres indwelling in the natural forms, as their souls or vitalizing properties, without at the same time consulting his heart's instinct of Deity—without a spiritual perception of God, he inevitably terminates in Pantheism. We must look deeper into our own hearts than we have yet done to save us from this result. Pantheism bids fair to be the fashionable theology among the transcendental metaphysicians and philosophers. But it is a spurious theology thrown off by the head, and with which the heart has had nothing to do. It is as cold as an icicle, and barren as a rock. The devotional instinct promptly rejects it, and the heart revolts at it. In a matter that engages our affections, as well as our intellects, we can not divorce them. The former will be heard, no matter what the latter may dictate. The truth is, there is a perfect harmony and accord between them; and that, too, without the surrender to the least of the demands of either—without any compromise or concession by either head or heart. To get at this accord we must consult the one as well as the other: and we may be assured that the God that will be entirely received by the developed heart of man will be fully affirmed by his developed reason. The affectional nature of man is as important a part of him, if not more so, as his intellectual nature. And following the one at the expense of the other is a suicidal crucifixion. Unfold error and misery have been introduced into the world by it. The heart can not be proscribed by the intellect, nor will it be taught any thing contrary to its own native impulses and instincts. No length of time, nor creed nor dogma of the intellect, will ever destroy or quiet the spontaneous loves and demands of the heart. Though the Hindoo mothers may continue yet for thousands of years to sacrifice their babes to Juggernaut, or commit them to the waters of the Ganges, in pursuance of a heartless religion, yet they will love them still, and at every new sacrifice their hearts will bleed afresh. Though I should be now a Pantheist, and go out and view the starry glory of the night, or walk forth into the fields and inhale the fragrance of the morning breath, and see the bright flowers, and hear the carol of birds, and enjoy all the beauties of earth, air, and sky, my soul would still, nevertheless, rise in spontaneous adoration to a Supreme Being. My Pantheistic notions would not still the involuntary aspirations of my heart for Deity. When I hear the music of sweet voices,

feel all the warm human affections, or when I study the beautiful and useful in art, science, or nature, my heart goes forth in love and praise to God, regardless of all my intellectual abstractions. This is my nature, and it is yours, and it is folly in us to strive to quench it by any intellectualization that opposes it.

The merely natural and philosophic mind will never get rid of the manifold difficulties of conceiving God, until it has a spiritual perception of him as the Divine Man. It has taken up the idea that God is the geometric center of the universe—the Great Positive Mind. And from that refused and intensified focalization of life and power he radiates a spirit of life, and imparts his substance from that center, through concentric spheres, to the gross external. Hence it conceives God as fixed mathematically in the center of the universe, be he man, or brain, or a positive mind. There is no spirituality in this conception. It is purely mathematical. God is the spiritual center of the universe. And what is the spiritual center? Why, it is the Best Man—the Being of the most good and truth. The Being of the greatest love and the most wisdom is the center of the universe. But the center only corresponds to the mathematical center of the material universe, and is not defined by place, but by quality. Here is a familiar illustration: In a circle of friends, or a society, the one among them of the greatest moral and spiritual worth, and the most intelligence, is the center of that circle or society. And to be that spiritual center it is not necessary that he should physically occupy the mathematical center. He moves about, goes and comes at will, yet everywhere, and at all times, he is still the spiritual center of that circle. He is the center, not by virtue of his being physically large man or a strong man, but solely by virtue of his being the best and wisest man—by virtue of his quality, and not his quantity. In like manner God is the spiritual center of the universe, and to be such it is not required that he should occupy physically the geometric center. But he can move forth through all his creation, and still preserve his central position in the spiritual, and thus, by correspondence, fill the mathematical center of the physical universe.

Again, the merely natural and philosophic mind stumbles at the difficulty of conceiving how a human being can be the source of such immense worlds of matter, and such an inconceivable power, as is displayed in the material universe. But this difficulty also vanishes upon a spiritual perception of the matter. Goodness or love is Divine spiritual substance, and the correspondent of matter, and can not be measured or weighed. The masses of matter in the external universe originate from, and are sustained by, the Divine love. So truth is the Divine spiritual power, and the correspondent of physical power constantly displayed in the material universe, and can not be measured by how much a man can lift, or by any material standard. Matter is the Divine love, and physical power the Divine truth, on a lower plane of existence, and discreted from it. Let us advert again to our former illustration. The best and wisest man, who is the spiritual center of the society or circle, by the intensity of his love for his fellows, disclosed in his speech and actions, fills their hearts with love; he instructs them in certain truths, and shows them how to live them. In other words, he imparts good and truth to them. This is spiritual power. And they, becoming convinced of those truths, go and do them. This is physical power. It was the truths of the Revolution of '76 that lay behind the immense physical power that our veteran fathers put forth in that day, and which originated it. Hence the physical omnipotence of God comes perpetually from his Divine truth, and his display of matter in the external universe comes perpetually from his Divine love.

Another difficulty of the scientific and philosophic mind is to conceive how it is that God imparts his life, and power, and substance to the universe, without imparting himself to it. This is one of the strongholds of Pantheism. It is this difficulty that is drifting the merely scientific and philosophic mind toward the materialism of Pantheism more and more every day. But when we have a spiritual perception of God as the Divine Man, this difficulty also vanishes. It is a property of love and wisdom that they do not grow less by being given or imparted to others. Truth and good do not diminish or lose by being communicated. On the contrary, instead of diminishing, they increase. Does the wisest and best man of the before-mentioned circle lose anything by imparting his virtue and truth to his fellows? Suppose he instructed them in all the truths he knew, and imparted to them all his love, has he lost any thing? Has he imparted himself to them? After all the truths that Swedenborg and Fourier have imparted to the world, with all their love and well-wishes for mankind, they were still Swedenborg and Fourier. They lost nothing. Precisely so God imparts his Divine love and wisdom to the universe, and in the external world they become physical power and substance.

There is another Pantheistic difficulty, to wit: the Divine coexistence of a personal and human God. But this, too, arises from a materialistic notion of him. The spiritual perception excludes this difficulty. In the spiritual realm "thought

brings presence, and affection conjoins." A man is present in the spiritual world when his thought is. Wherever the Divine truth is, there God is present.

Furthermore and finally, the Pantheist makes God one with, or inseparably united to, his universe, and starts the difficulty of separating him from it, so as to be personal and identical. This objection is completely answered by the doctrine of discrete degrees, which is a scientific as well as spiritual fact. There are two kinds of degrees in nature. One is called continuous degrees, and consists of increment or decrement of the same thing, as from darkness to light, or from heat to cold; the same taking place by continuity. The other is called discrete degrees, such as end, cause and effect, internal and external—different layers or planes of the same thing, and uniting only by correspondence. For instance, ice is discreted from water, and water from steam, etc. Yet they are all the same thing on different discrete planes. The spirit of man is discreted from his body, which is one thing, and his spirit another, uniting only by correspondence. If they were not thus discreted and independent, the spirit would also disolve when the body did. So the spiritual world is discreted from the natural world. In like manner God is separated from his highest spiritual universe by a discrete degree, and it again from the next lower by a discrete degree, and thus on by concentric discrete degrees to the external or lowest plane. But although he is thus separated from his universe, and communicates thus with it only by correspondence, he is still within it, and imparts to it incessantly his love and truth, and walks forth in it the spiritual center—an identical, personal, intelligent, and emotional human being! This is the God that the instinctive worship of humanity has been striving after and adoring for ages past. Though the head has not yet clearly conceived him, yet the heart knew him, and felt and worshiped him.

We shall have a clearer understanding of all these stupendous truths when those dim eyes, and dull ears, and thick tongues shall be succeeded by a bright spiritual vision, a delicate ear, and a willing heart.

Pittsford, Dec. 23, 1853.

A HINDOO REFORMER.

The following extraordinary account of a Hindoo Reformer is taken from the *Valley Friend of India*, published at the London Missionary station at Mirzapore. It is so remarkable that this Hindoo convert should be so sympathetic with that of the London Society.

THE NATIVE REFORMER, RAJAYA RABA.

"We mentioned, in our last year's volume, a native reformer who had appeared in the Mirzapore District, and was preaching up a crusade against the god's idol-worship, and caste distinctions. During the last month, we have had a visit of several days' duration from our newly enlightened friend, and have learned from his own lips the story of his conversion, and the object contemplated in his present movements. He says that he is a Brahmin in caste (considered tantamount to a Brahmin); that he was, up to a late period, a Hindoo in the observance of all national customs, that he had a dream, in which God appeared to him and informed him that all India would become Christian. His impression is, that being honored with such a dream, he has virtually received a commission to destroy idolatry. He has drawn up a form of confession, which he reads before the people, and requires all who are his disciples to adopt, and act accordingly. The nature of it is, that God has formed all men, but that they have forsaken him and worshiped idols; but that they should now repent and ask for mercy and forgiveness. His first idea was, that the East India Company would employ him as a demolisher of Hindooism, and with a view to this end he wrote to several of the Company's civil servants. On not receiving a reply he was very much disappointed, and had resolved to proceed to Calcutta, when certain reminders suggested to him that instead of applying to magistrates and judges, he should write to the missionaries. This advice he adopted, and wrote to the Rev. C. B. Leupold, which led to the interview with that gentleman of which we have made mention. Mr. Leupold preached him to receive Christian instruction first, but he declined to become a disciple in the usual way. Such are still his sentiments. At this place he made a request to be baptized, and seemed to wish to be employed in connection with the Mission, although not wishing to receive any salary, but it was impossible to get him seriously to listen to the great duties of the gospel, without the knowledge and general belief of which baptism would be a mere prostration. Still, he said that if we would send him a Christian catechist to be with him, he would learn of him, and they conjointly would do the work. He has entirely abandoned the distinctions of caste, cordially repudiates the worship of the gods, and on these subjects he speaks with such power that even Pandits are unable to withstand him, and he has, moreover, great facility in native vernaculars. He recites and chants his productions with great solemnity. He is, however, at present quite unacquainted with the truth, when asked by a Khatri, who is in sentiment a Deist, and who opposed to Hindooism, Mohammedanism, and Christianity, as to what his new creed was, he replied he had no creed, only

has repudiated his own creed. When the Khatri again pressed him to the consideration, whether it was not a foolish thing to pull down the old house when he has not sketched the plan of the new one, he was somewhat staggered, and made obsequious to his interrogator, thus virtually acknowledging him as his teacher, he subsequently made the same to the missionary.

"While in Mirzapore, hundreds of persons have been to see him, and on one occasion the whole town presented the aspect of a *mela*. He appears also to be comparatively indifferent to money, as on one occasion a present of 200 rupees was made to him, but he would only accept half of it.

"Doubtless the man possesses influence and power to do much in reforming and destroying Hindooism. To what extent he will be allowed to prosecute his mission, without violent interference on the part of the Hindoos, is yet to be seen; the people generally consider him an *Aghor-punka*, and that sect has been too long tolerated to be now interfered with. His boldness is remarkable, and, among the mass, it is very successful. But, besides the mass, he cherishes the mission to influence the native princes. To several of them he has addressed letters, in the form of commands, requiring it, to submit to the will of Heaven, in respect to the spread of Christianity and the abolition of idolatry and demon worship; and it is said that the Rajah of Benares has given him a considerable portion of land at a small rent, on which he has built a house, and proposes to establish a Christian colony."—*Presbyterian*.

LETTER FROM WARREN CHASE.

LE RAY, N. Y., Dec. 22, 1853.

MEASRS. PARTRIDGE AND BRITTON: A brief narrative of my travels may serve to apprise the friends of the condition of our philosophy in different places, and it is for that, mainly, that I send you occasional accounts; but I have left out many, and some of the most interesting and enthusiastic meetings where I have been, lest my articles should crowd your all-important sheet, or be crowded out, which is better.

I came from Canastota to Syracuse on Saturday, and on Sunday evening, pursuant to notice in the dailies, lectured at the City Hall to a very small audience for that place, even in a snow storm, as it was. Syracuse is the coldest, densest, and most conservative place I have been in, on this subject; but I suppose it will swing to the other extreme in time. The people evidently depend on their salt-works and old churches, or the political conventions, to save them. The Jerry Rescue celebration annually, and the preaching of S. J. May, may aid them some, but the "Hard Shell" and "Soft Shell," and salt and churches, seem thus far to leave them in the dark, and far behind the times. I do hope Judge Edwards will go there and try to awake them. No many there know him that I have here he could shake them out of their lethargic stupor into political and religious bunkum has helped them.

On Monday, I came to Auburn. What a difference! One day's notice, and near one thousand people were assembled in one of the best halls of the city, and listened attentively for nearly two hours to me, and then regretted that my engagements would not allow me to stay longer and give a course, etc. But this is owing much to it to the labors of P. B. Randolph, and a few other friends in Auburn. I was disappointed in the condition of mind at Auburn. The pilgrimage of a few to Mountain Cove had a most salutary effect on them and some others, and many who did not sympathize with that more now see and feel its mission duty. The minds have fallen from many eyes, and those who had been in hell, rejoice with them. The short stay I made there has not only constantly meeting and parting with friends, and I heard of many I could not see, until I left fully satisfied that Auburn, notwithstanding the State Prison and tall chimneys, is one of the strongholds of the Heralmal Philosophy. Perhaps I might say here, that Brother Alanson Bush of Auburn, owns a large tract of land in East Tennessee, which he desires for the home of two or three hundred families of Associates who believe in the Heralmal Philosophy and a human brotherhood—individual sovereignty and the right and duty of private judgment. He reports very favorably of the climate, soil, etc. Any person may learn more by addressing him, or W. B. Tucker, at Auburn.

From Auburn I reached here late last night, where, for the first time in my travels, I had disappointed an audience by being too late, but it was owing to a change of running time and intersecting of cars, yet from the interest and anxiety I feel sure of having a good time here for a few days.

WARREN CHASE.

PARTRIDGE AND BRITTON.—It is a dear delight for the soul to have true in this world of sinners. It makes a pillow of sorrow for the slough which is turning with tears and the touch of truth. It is a bold into the very source of sorrow. It is a huge undercurrent, forever pulsing, only when the mind, when weary of sadness, may extend for a course of constant love—a warmth in the clasp of friendship, forever lingering on the hand—a comforting voice that dwells as with an angel voice on the sorrow—de of misery falling on the bruised and troubled hearts of the world. Be of sorrow and wisdom long withheld, doctored withers as chastening grief upon our nature, but there is no release to the entrance of broken faith.

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NEW YORK, SATURDAY, JANUARY 14, 1854.

WHOLE NO., 89.

ANCIENT CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALISM

BY WILLIAM FISHER, C.M.

In the pending controversy in respect to the alleged existing intercourse between man and the denizens of the unseen world, the professedly Christian Church has, strange to say, shown herself the most formidable champion in the negative. Not that the believers in Christ and the Bible suppose it impossible, *in the nature of things*, for any interchange of thought to take place between men in this world and invisible intelligences in the other, for the Book which they professedly revere as the Chart of their faith, is full of testimonies to the reality of such occurrences. But it is assumed and proclaimed with much assurance by them, that the link of connection between mundane and spiritual intelligences was permanently severed at the close of the apostolic age—that since then the Spirit-world has been dumb and silent to all the invocations of mortals, and all alleged messages, impressions, and miraculous endowments from that quarter have necessarily belonged to the category of illusions or willful impostures.

Now it is upon this assumption, and upon this alone, that the Church's whole opposition to the doctrine of existing spiritual intercourse rests; and unless the assumption can be shown to be well founded, the opposition must evidently either *give way*, or be *turned with equal force* against the reality of the same phenomena as alleged in Biblical records to have existed in the former ages of the world.

But where, we ask, are we to find a shadow of proof that spiritual intercourse was intended to cease at the close of the apostolic age? It will not be asserted that this proof is found in the known constitution of man or of Spirits, or in the known relations of the material and spiritual worlds, for these, for aught we can determine, are essentially the same now as they were before the apostles were in their graves. Nor can I imagine where proof of the point can be found in the Bible. The only three passages I have yet seen or heard adduced as proof (viz., the refusal of Abraham to be allowed to send Lazarus from his bosom back to the earth; the saying of Jesus on the cross, "It is finished," and the prohibition in the Revelation of St. John against adding any thing to that particular book, Rev. xxii. 18), it seems to me do not meet the case, and the very weakness of the arguments derived from these passages conveys an idea of the despatchment of a cause which finds it necessary to employ them.

But on the other hand, Jesus and his apostles seem to have considered a perpetuity of the spiritual intercourse during the after ages of the true Church as a *matter of course*, and shown by several implications that they expected its continuance as long as Christians remained faithful. Thus Jesus promised the Holy Spirit *indiscriminately* to those who would sincerely and devoutly ask it of the Father (Luke xi. 13), and Paul distinctly characterized the Christian dispensation as one which brought those who received it to "an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first born, which are written in heaven, and to the God the Judge of all, and to the *spirits of just men made perfect*" Heb. xii. 22, 23. It appears that during the age of the apostles, prophets, seers, discerners of spirits, speakers with diverse tongues, workers of miracles, and other "*mediums*" for divine and spiritual influences, existed and were multiplied in the Church everywhere; and there is no evidence, either in reason or history, to show that the gifts of these were all taken away and the lamp of heaven forever ceased its direct shininings; the last of the apostles *ascended* into his grave. There is, on the contrary, the most direct and positive historical evidence that these spiritual gifts were universally considered by the Christians as existing uninterrupted, to a greater or less extent in the Church, for nearly three hundred years after the commencement of the Christian era. Their existence was the disputed only by a few, and by the mass of the Catholic world their occasional occurrence has been admitted in all ages down to the present day, and even some Protestant sects have, until recently, believed the same.

Let us now glance at some of the numerous historical testimonies as to the post-apostolic perpetuity of spiritual gifts and intercourse in the Christian Church. The learned Dr. Mosheim, in treating the history of the Church during the second century, says, "It is easier to conceive than to express how much the *miraculous powers and the extraordinary gifts* which the Christians exercised on various occasions contributed to extend the limits of the Church. The gift of foreign tongues appears to have gradually ceased as soon as many nations became enlightened with the truth, and numerous churches of Christians were everywhere established; it became less necessary than it was at first. But the gifts with which God favored the rising Church of Christ were, as we learn from numerous testimonies of the ancient still conferred upon particular persons here and there."¹ Murdock, the translator of Mosheim, sanctions these at-

ments with emphasis, adding a long note, in which he argues the point, and refers to numerous passages in the ancients to establish it.

The epistles of St. Barnabas, St. Clement, St. Ignatius, St. Polycarp, and the Shepherd of Hermas, written immediately after the apostolic age, or perhaps one or two of them a little before the death of St. John, distinctly recognize the existence of miraculous, prophetic, and other extraordinary spiritual gifts in the Christian church during the lives of their authors; and these epistles were for a long time afterward publicly read in the Christian churches as possessing an authority little inferior to that of the apostolic writings themselves. The authors of these respective productions are called the *Apostolic Fathers*, from the fact that they were the contemporaries and immediate successors of the apostles. The writer of the epistle of St. Barnabas is thought to be the Barnabas spoken of in the Acts of the Apostles as at one time the companion of Paul, though by others this has been disputed. St. Clement is supposed to be the Clement spoken of by Paul in Phil. iv. 3. St. Hermas was a brother of a bishop of Rome, and wrote his tract in his old age, about the middle of the second century. The revelation which it contains purports to have been given him by an angel who appeared in the habit of a shepherd; and hence the book is entitled "The Shepherd of Hermas."

The account which Hermes gave of his experience will be recognized as bearing a close resemblance to some experiences of modern mediums. In the beginning of his revelations he fell into an ecstasy, and he was *carried away* by spirit, when an angel in the form of a young woman appeared to him and convinced him of some particular sin to which he was addicted. At another time an angel in the form of an aged and venerable woman appeared to him while on his knees in prayer, and took him by the hand and raised him up, and made some revelation to him respecting the Church. When at a subsequent time he was walking through the fields and praying that this revelation might be confirmed, he heard something like a human voice saying to him, "Doubt not, Hermes." The Shepherd Spirit, from whom he received his principal visions and revelations, appeared to him after this, and was for a long time his frequent companion. Finally, after he had written his book, he says, "The angel which had delivered me to that shepherd came into the house and sat upon the bed, and that shepherd stood at his right hand; then he called me and said, 'I delivered thee and thy house to this shepherd that thou mightest be protected by him.' And I said, 'Yes, Lord'; and he added, 'Whoever shall do according to the words which I have said, he shall be saved.'"

ording to the commands of this shepherd, who is a prince of great authority, and in great honor with God, he shall live; but they that shall not keep his commands shall deliver themselves unto death, and shall be every one guilty of his own blood. But I say unto thee, keep these commandments, and thou shalt find a cure for all thy sin."*

St. Ignatius was an immediate disciple and personal associate of the beloved St. John, and was by the latter appointed bishop of Antioch. He was said to be "a man in all things like unto the apostles." He was summoned from his bishopric to Rome in the year 127, where he suffered martyrdom by being exposed to the fury of wild beasts in the theater. He was accompanied to Rome by some of the members of his church, who wrote an account of his journey and arrival there, and testify to the existence of visions and spiritual apparitions at that age in the following passages: "The night after his [Ignatius'] sufferings," say they, "we were together watching in prayer, that God would vouchsafe us [weak men] some assurance of what had passed; whereupon several of the company fell into a slumber (ecstasical, because watching in prayer), and therein saw visions in which Ignatius was represented; which, when we had conferred together, we glorified God, being thereby assured of his blessedness."

St. Polycarp also, in the earlier part of his life, was a personal disciple and associate of St. John, and was by the apostle appointed bishop of Smyrna. During the early ages of the Church he appears to have been universally considered as endued with similar spiritual gifts to those which characterized the apostles, one among other proofs of which fact is the esteem in which his writings were held for three hundred years, during which time, as before stated, they were publicly read in the churches in connection with those of the apostles. This holy man suffered martyrdom for the Christian cause in the year 147, when at an advanced age, on account of his last suffering, with what preceded and followed, was written in a circular letter by some members of his church at Smyrna, and directed to all other churches, and some particulars of the history are entirely conclusive as to the manifestation of spiritual presence and influence in those days. Speaking of several others who suffered martyrdom at the same time, they say, "While they were under trial, we think they were absent from the body (probably under extraordinary impressions), or, rather, the Lord Christ stood with them, and conversed with them, and revealed things to them, inconceivable by man; as if they were no longer men."

slowly become angels. As to Polycarp, he saw a vision three days before he was taken; and beheld, the pillow under his head he saw all in a flame; whereupon, turning to those about him, he said, prophetically, 'I shall be burnt alive.' After his apprehension, and while he was going into the place of execution, there came a voice from heaven, saying, 'Be strong, and quit thyself like a man, Polycarp.' Now no one saw who spoke to him, but many of our brethren heard the voice." After describing the scenes of the execution, the writers say, "Such was the end of Polycarp, who, in our times, was a truly apostolical and prophetic teacher; for every word that went out of his mouth either has been already fulfilled or will be." The writer of the copy of this account, from which the foregoing is extracted, adds, "This epistle was transcribed from the copy of Irenæus, the disciple of Polycarp, by Caius; after which I, Prionius, wrote it from the same copy, which I found, by a revelation, wherein Polycarp appeared and directed me to it, as I have and do declare in a most solemn manner.

Justin Martyr, an eminent apologist and defender of Christianity, who flourished about the middle of the second century, affirmed, according to Eusebius, that the gift of prophecy shone brightly in the Church in his time. About the year 180, Athenagoras, in an apology which he was commissioned by his Christian brethren to carry to the Emperor of Rome, describes it in what in our phrase would be called "*speaking mediums*," and which ~~seemed to have~~ abounded in the Church at those times under the names of prophets and prophetesses. "I call them prophets," says he, "who, being out of themselves and their own thoughts, did utter forth whatsoever by the impelling power of the Spirit he wrought in them; while the Divine Operator served himself of them, or their organs, even as men do of a trumpet, blowing through it. Thus have we prophets for witnesses and affirmers of our faith; and is it not equal and worthy of human reason, O ye emperors, to yield up our faith to the Divine Spirit who moves the mouths of the prophets as his instruments?"

Ammonius Saccas, a Christian philosopher, who opened a school at Alexandria, in the latter part of the second century (which school was for a long time in great repute), taught the art of procuring communion with spirits, or demons, as he called them. His disciples called this art "theurgy;" but whether the spirits invoked by such means were always of the most Christian character does not appear. (See Mosheim

During the fore part of the third century (spiritual gifts in the Church still continuing as general as before), Eusebius relates, that while a persecution raged at Alexandria, a young woman named Potamia, whose courage and fortitude under her last sufferings excited the astonishment of the spectators. Three days after the execution of her body, this same Potamia appeared in spirit by night, "to one Basilides, a Roman soldier, and, covering his head with a crown, said he must shortly be taken away. The vision wrought effectually to convert Basilides," and who, for his confession of faith in Christ, was loaded with chains, and shortly afterwards rewarded with the crown of martyrdom. "Many others also, at the same time, in Alexandria, were wrought upon to the open confession of their faith in Christ, by visions of Potamia, who in dreams urged them to do so."

An account of the election of a Bishop of Jerusalem in about 330 AD. The Bishop of Jerusalem, as showing the manifest operation of spiritual influences at that age. It is to the effect that when Narcissus, Bishop of Jerusalem, was about one hundred years old, and disqualified by that extreme age for the further discharge of his official functions, Alexander, a Cappadocian bishop, was admonished, in a vision by night, to go to Jerusalem for some purpose. When Alexander approached Jerusalem, several of the chief persons of the church of that city also had visions in which they were directed to hasten out of the gates of the city, and receive the bishop ordained for them by God. Hence, thus miraculously appointed, Alexander exercised the functions of bishop to that church for years, and died while under the influence of the Holy Spirit, and was buried in the city, to the impraisement for the faith, in the year 253.

Tertullian, in his tract concerning the soul, ch. ix., says: "We had a right, after St. John, to expect prophesying, as we do now acknowledge the same spiritual gift; for there is at this day living among us a sister who is partaker of the revelations, which she receives under ecstasy in the spirit in the public congregation; wherein she converses with angels, sometimes also with the Lord, and seeth and heareth divine mysteries, and discovereth the hearts of some persons, and does minister succor to such as desire it; and while the Scriptures are read, or psalms are singing, or they are preaching, or prayers are offered up, subjects from thence are ministered in her visions. We had once some discourse touching the soul while this sister was in the spirit; after the public services were over, and most of the people gone, she argued us up with what she saw, as the custom was, for these things are heedfully digested, that they may be duly proved. Among other things, she told us that a material soul was before her, and the Spirit was beheld by her, being of a quality not sensible, empty, but of the color of the sky, and of a thin brightness, pervading the form throughout of the human body." What was

informed Spiritualist can fail to be struck with the similarity of this description given by Tertullian, and many occurrences which are witnessed at the present day! The description which the prophets, mentioned in this extract, gave of the soul, will be recognized as perfectly accordant with the revelations which Swedenborg and subsequent "mediums" have given on the same subject.

Notwithstanding there appears to have been a gradual decline and final cessation of *heathen oracles* after the establishment of the Christian Church (and we might show strong reasons for believing that these oracles were actual spiritual communications, as both heathens and Christians believed them to be), there seem to have still been among the heathens some mediums for spirits (or the alleged gods) for a long time after the apostolic age. Between these spirits and their mediums on the one hand, and the Christian prophets on the other, there was generally an open hostility; but wherever a trial of powers occurred, the heathen spirit was forced to give way, showing the existence still in the Church of that power conferred by Jesus upon his disciples to "cast out devils." Hence we find Tertullian, in his "Apology for the Christian Religion," boldly challenging all heathendom to a trial of the powers of their patron spirits and divinities, who were accustomed to possess and speak through the bodies of certain men. "Ibiterro," says he, "we have used words; we will now come to a demonstration of the very thing, that your Gentile gods are no one of them greater than another. For a decision of the point, let any one that is judged to be possessed by a devil be brought into open court before your tribunals, when that spirit shall be commanded by a Christian to speak; he shall as truly confess himself a devil there, as elsewhere; he falsely claims to be a god. Or let one equally be produced who is among you Gentiles judged to be *inspired of God*, who waits at your altars, and is esteemed a sacred person by you nay, though he be acted by one of your most venerated deities, be it Diana the heavenly virgin, or Esculapius: that describes your medicines, and who pretends to relieve the dying yet these, or any others, when they are summoned, if they dare to lie unto the Christian summoning, and if they do not confess themselves openly to be devils, then let that reproachful Christian's blood be spilt by you on the spot."

It may not be presumed that Tertullian would have given this open challenge to the heathen deities (or tutelary spirits, unless the example of common and notorious occurrences has been such as to give him confidence of victory in the trial) and hence we find him afterward triumphing over the vanquished demons in the following manner: "A fine Deity, indeed, that is subject unto a man!" But they know that our Christ is their judge, and that they are by an uncontrollable authority made subject to his servants; therefore from our touch and breath they fly out of the bodies where they did reside unwilling and with grief, in your presence."

Tertullian died about the year 231, and hence this reflects the state of spiritual gifts among the Christians must be considered as applicable to the Church a little before that time. Numerous testimonies might be cited to prove that this power of "casting out devils," or in the more fastidious phrase of modern Spiritualists, of expelling "unprogressed spirits," continued for a long time after that, as did also the necessity of frequently exercising it. Indeed, Mosheim informs us that it was the third century the office of exorcist, as a special office, was created in the churches, it being the duty of the one holding it to cast out these subtle and unchristian spirits from the bodies of such as were infested by them, and which they drew by a process similar to that employed by the spoules.

Thus, employing a collection from the ancient Fathers no before us, as well as the testimony of Mosheim, Eusebius, and others, we might go on to cite numerous passages to prove that spiritual manifestations in the form of prophetic dreams, visions, impressions, speaking impulses, power to cast devils, etc., continued more or less in the Christian Church, and were universally recognized by its members, until the Church, owing to outer prosperity, grew so corrupt and worldly as to render the free and general access and operation of spiritual influences any longer impossible. These influences were operative upon simple-hearted and devout men and women in all classes of Christian society, and even simple and unsophisticated little children often uttered the words of a paternal wisdom while under the divine afflatus, and by such revelations thus given forth the Church was principally governed, and opposing religions were triumphantly conquered for more than two centuries. Indeed, no Christian ever thought of denying the existence of these spiritual influences in the Church until near the age of Constantine. According to Eusebius they existed in the Church to some considerable extent, even at that age, and Constantine himself sometimes experienced them—not only being admonished by the vision of the luminous cross which he saw at mid-day in the heavens, but being warned in dreams and visions concerning the plots of his enemies.* And, according to Mosheim, so firm and general was the belief in spiritual communication in the fourth century, that St. Ambrose publicly cited the te-

* *FEAST. Life of Constantine*, B. I. Chap. xxvii., viii.

timony of Spirits, called *dæmons*, who spoke through the vocal organs of men (as *Spirits* now do) in proof of the falsity of the doctrines of Arius; and the testimony was rebutted by the followers of Arius, not by denying the reality of those spiritual communications, but by saying that Ambrose had bribed the *Spirits* to give such testimony.*†

Dispensing with the abundant matter which might be given as corroborative of the foregoing, what, so far as we have gone, is the plain aspect of the question which has occupied our thoughts? Why, it is proved as plainly and positively as any point can possibly be proved by historical evidence, that the manifestations of spiritual power and influence did not cease with the apostolic age, the assertion of modern theologians to the contrary notwithstanding, but that they continued in uninterrupted succession, though somewhat declining in degree, for at least two hundred and fifty years afterward. But in proving this we prove at the same time that apostasy and communion is the normal privilege of the true and faithful Christian Church, irrespective of the age of the world in which it may exist, and that that Church which denies the power of angels and scolds even the thought, of intercourse with spirit and angels, must necessarily have experienced a mournful defection from the estate of that true and primitive Church, whose members, by an express Divine dispensation, were brought "to an innumerable company of angels, to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to God the judge of all." Oh, professed Church of Christ! how art thou miserably fallen from the heavenly connections in which thou wast placed in thine earlier days! How art thou puffed up with worldly pride and power, glowing upon the wealth of thy learning, thine estates, and thy gold, while, like thy prototype and prophetic mirror, the Laodicean Church of old, thou art in all spiritual things poor, and miserable, and blind, and naked! Consider, now, thy fearfully degenerate state, and repent thee in dust and ashes, if peradventure God will listen to thy penitent prayers and restore to thine inner sanctuary the glory of his ancient Shekinah, whose beams have so long been clouded in darkness near!

But we fear that all exhortation to the Church, as a body, to train, and that the sentence is far more applicable to her communicants, "He that is unjust let him be unjust still, and he that is holy let him be holy still, FOR THE TIME IS AT HAND" And "he that hath ears to hear" may now, we think, distinctly hear the angel trumpet sounding through the earth, saying to all who are willing "to follow the Lamb WHITHERSOEVER HE GOETH," "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues—come to the glorious city of the New Jerusalem, which already beginneth to descend from God out of heaven, in which the spirit of the Lord alone reigns over his people forever!"

But this spiritual defection of the Church—the "*falling away*"—was distinctly predicted by the apostle Paul, that a "*man of sin*" might be revealed. (2 Thess. 13-12.) It is the "*man of sin*" I understand the mature state of ungodliness in general, and the lust of spiritual power and dominion in particular, whether applying to Catholics or Protestants—men in this world or Spirits in the other. It is that spirit of human selfishness that exalteth itself above all that is called God, and which, sitting in the temple of God, seeketh to be worshipped as God, and which, I have no disposition to deny, is in some degree represented in the "*signs and lying wonders, and deceivableness of a portion of the spiritual commandments of this day*." All these, together with the *erotic* carnality of a Church which, like the Jewish Church of old, has lived out its time and ceased to perform use, will the Lord destroy with the brightness of his coming, as he demands in these latter days, "*with all his holy an'ers*" to consume error and corruption, and establish his everlasting kingdom!

Where, then, is the theological objection to the doctrine of spiritual intercourse as applicable to this day? The doctrine, when viewed from the point of view of the history of the Church, is not only applicable to this day, but is surely can not be proved illegitimate by the gospel, or by the history of the post-apostolic Church, for we have seen that the teachings and examples of these are decidedly in its favor. Whoever denies its possibility in the nature of existing things, by that denial acknowledges his own destitution of its graces and privileges, and thus utters his own condemnation, as judged by the standard of the early Church. Whoever *ever* indiscriminately denounces the modern spiritual communications, as demonic, utters a sentence equally severe against the existing Church, for had not the latter sadly degenerated as to her spiritual powers since the days of Tertullian, he might now easily exorcise and check the demons, and Tertullian and his confessor exorcised and silenced the Spirit

* *Holstein*, B. II, Cont. IV, Part II, Chap. III, § 8.
 I confess myself fortunate in having, in the investigation of the *modern spirit* in the history of the Christian Church, fallen in with an English work equally written on this subject. It is entitled, "The General History of Christian Theology, from the days of Christ's appearing Himself to the present Prophecy," etc. The first edition of it was published in the year 1713, and the second in 1765. The last [ed.] at London. It is specially valuable for the original extracts from the writings of the ancient Fathers on *loving* upon this question, and from those extracts I have freely drawn, having consulted a great amount of additional testimony equally pertinent to the purposes of the present article. My argument might say be prolonged and fortified by additional citations from Eusebius and other writers, but these are generally so similar to each other as may be scarce to justify their trouble.